



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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CP&P Staff Reactions to the Death of a Child 4-26-99

When a child under CP&P supervision dies, the LO Manager must be sensitive to the personal needs of, not only the assigned Worker but the Supervisor of the case, and any other staff who may have known the child (e.g. previously assigned Workers/Supervisors and/or Foster Home/Adoption Home Finding Staff who worked closely with the foster/adoptive parents). All of these staff members may be grieving the loss of the child on some level, or be affected by the grief of their colleagues. The LO Manager as well as CP&P administration, at all levels, should support the Worker and Supervisor, and any other staff affected by the death of the child. Discussions about personal needs and grieving may take place during case conferences about the child's death or may be separate discussions. It may be appropriate to enlist the assistance of less affected staff in helping the assigned Worker and Supervisor attend to, and complete the required activities and reports.

Additional support may be available to an individual staff member, a group, or an entire LO in the form of a grief recovery seminar provided by an outside consultant/therapist or grief counseling by a psychologist/mental health professional (private vendor/consultant). The provision of such services should be based on its reasonableness and the availability of funding.

Whenever it is determined that such a need exists in an office, the LO Manager should request such services through the Area Director. Payment for such services is processed through the Purchasing Unit using the form PV 6/93, State of New Jersey Payment Voucher (Vendor Invoice).

Should the services described above be insufficient or inappropriate in an individual situation, the Area Director may explore alternatives with the Administrator, Office of Human Resources.

Case Management Considerations 3-27-92

When CP&P is responsible for a child's funeral and burial, the Worker oversees the arrangements, assisted, if necessary, by the Foster Care/Adoption Home Finding Unit member involved with the resource family (see [CP&P-V-A-6-400](#)). At times, however, it may be best, for case management purposes, to assign this responsibility to another LO staff member, one who is not personally/emotionally affected by the child's death (e.g., another member of the field unit, a member of the Foster Care/Adoption Home Finding Unit, or the RDS).

The Worker and his Supervisor discuss the child's death and its impact on the Worker. Together they outline a plan for making the necessary phone calls and arrangements for the child's funeral and burial. The Worker should be encouraged to carry out the plan. If the Supervisor observes that the Worker is having difficulty handling this responsibility, however, or upon request of the Worker, the Supervisor consults with local management staff, to assess whether these tasks should be reassigned to another staff member.

In addition, it may be necessary to reassign the responsibility of securing funeral arrangements when the Worker's personal convictions or religious beliefs conflict with those of the birth or foster/adoptive family, and these convictions/beliefs interfere with the Worker's ability to address the needs of the case and service the wishes of the family(s).

The Worker provides outreach, support and solace to the birth parents/family and/or foster/adoptive parents/family, whether or not he is directly involved in handling the funeral arrangements.